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THE MAGAZINE OF
THE MICHIGAN SOCIETY
OF ARCHITECTS

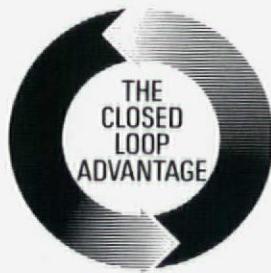
place

FALL 1991



RETROFIT

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A b o u t T h e C o v e r

Longer, lower, wider- the renovated Clapper residence in Orchard Lake pays homage to the Prairie School and oriental traditions in its strong horizontals and sheltering roofs.

Photography by Balthazar Korab

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An alphabetical listing of firms with location, specialty of practice and a contact architect's name.

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Home Alone

If home is indeed where the heart is, then designing a home must require a great deal of heart-and-soul on the part of the architect. It is a special breed of architect who can successfully translate the various needs and wants of the hopeful homeowner into space which is unique and special. Space which expresses not only the personality and spirit of the owner, but also the creativity of the architect, is rare. Not all architects can do it well. The ones featured in this issue of *Place* do it very well.

It is interesting to note that the most common question posed to me by people who discover that I am an architect is: "Oh, do you design houses?" Since my answer is no, this question invariably makes me rummage around in my mental file of professional longings and unfulfilled desires. I always find the same wish expressed to me by countless other architects to design houses.

The infinite variety of materials, details and spaces

make a stubborn design challenge. The one on one creative relationship with the client exposes the architect's skills in listening, problem solving and even psychology! The result is the work of two individuals, or groups of individuals, who stimulate each other and animate the design process. Is the product more important than the process, or vice versa? I'm not sure that it matters when the results are as satisfying as this issue's offerings!

Please pay particular attention to the feature on Ronald McDonald houses.

Think about the circumstances which force people to call these places home, and reflect on the incredible sensitivity that it takes to create living environments which respond to the special needs of these people, and then remember that home is truly where the heart is. ▼

Tim Casai, AIA



Due to publication deadlines in our summer '91 issue of *Place*, the project credits for the 110 Miller Building (Street Smart) were incomplete. In addition to those listed, the following should be added:

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Birmingham, Michigan
Consulting Architect for Interior Design:
GBA Architects
Birmingham, Michigan
Mechanical/Electrical Engineer for Interior Design:
James A. Partridge Associates
Lighting Design:
Gary Steffy Lighting Design, Inc.

The Michigan Architectural Foundation

It has been said that there are no easy solutions. Thirty-four years ago, an active group of Detroit and Michigan architects responded to professional concerns of that day with the establishment of an organization formed to "... receive and expend gifts, legacies and bequests for the purpose of education of students of architecture and to educate the public and individuals in the appreciation of architecture..."

Much work and the efforts of many individuals have sustained the Michigan Architectural Foundation since those early days. A restructuring in 1988 has given the organization its present structure and, as solutions are sought to the problems facing the profession in the 90s, the MAF is set to play a significant role.

Q What is the Michigan Architectural Foundation?

A The MAF is a non-profit, philanthropic organization established in 1957 to advance the quality of architecture and allied arts in the State of Michigan. Through the sponsorship of educational and charitable activities, the MAF works to:

- Increase public awareness of good architecture.
- Advance the science and art of planning and building through architectural research and education.

-Promote the preservation of historic buildings.

-Promote high quality in the built environment.

Q How is the Foundation structured?

A Although organized by the Michigan Society of Architects in support of the Society's purpose, the Michigan Architectural Foundation is a separate non-profit corporation governed by a seven-person Board of Trustees. Four of the trustees are elected from the Michigan Society of Architects Board of Directors. The remaining three trustees are elected at-large and may, or may not be members of the architectural profession. The chief executive officer of the Foundation is the President, also elected as one of the seven trustees, and who serves as the chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Q What are the activities of the MAF?

A Some of the significant recent activities have included: the purchase and renovation of the historic Beaubien House, support for the publication of "THE 50 MOST SIGNIFICANT STRUCTURES IN MICHIGAN," and funding of a variety of public awareness projects, e.g., Ann Arbor's "Chalk The Park," the Upper Peninsula's public TV program "Ask The Architect," the "Children's Exhibit" organized in several of the Chapters and the traveling display "The Townscapes of Europe."

Currently, the development of a major leadership

AIA Trust

scholarship honoring all Presidents of MSA is underway, and the successful high school design competition is expanding into a truly statewide activity. The Foundation also continues to co-sponsor the annual Health Facilities Seminar and has participated in the Vision 2000/2001 conferences. As curator of the Beaubien House art collection, the MAF is directing the enhancement and expansion of the holdings.

The publication of an annual architectural activities calendar is in the wings, and 1992 will see an increasing emphasis upon fund raising activities and events.

Q Who are the members of the Michigan Architectural Foundation?

A All members of the Board of Directors of the Michigan Society of Architects are ex-officio members of the Foundation serving as representatives of their respective chapters. Membership is also open to any other individual, non-architect as well as architect, who shares a concern for the built environment and an interest in architecture.

Membership offers an opportunity to become more closely involved with the activities of the MAF. Attendance at meetings and participation in committee work are welcomed, and a variety of additional benefits are developing.

Q How can I support the efforts of the

Michigan Architectural Foundation?

A Support through membership, through direct contributions and through involvement in Foundation activities is encouraged. The Michigan Architectural Foundation is not a new organization; however, a new phase in its existence is beginning. Scholarship and research assistance, architectural and environmental education and public outreach are part of a growing program. These will be the tools with which the MAF pursues its goal of uniting the public, the architectural profession and the construction industry in a common effort to ensure the quality of life through an improved natural and built environment. ▼

For information on Foundation activities and membership, contact:

Michigan
Architectural Foundation
553 East Jefferson Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48226
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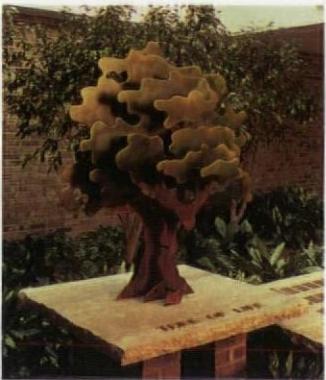
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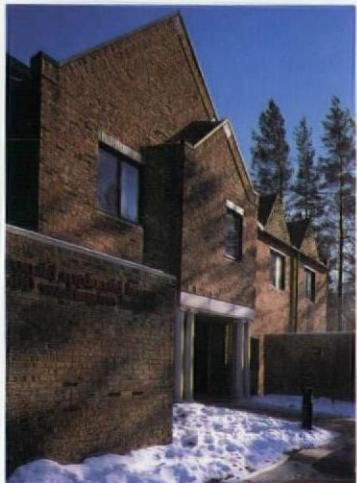
McHOME AWAY FROM HOME

The confinement of critically ill children in a hospital exacts a particular emotional strain on the parents of these children. Professionals have long held the belief that under such circumstances, a supportive, nurturing environment, populated by people similarly situated, can provide an important measure of relief. The Ronald McDonald House concept of providing a temporary housing facility for the parents of seriously ill children, offers such an environment. Each family takes care of itself, providing their own cooking and cleaning. Despite the size of these facilities the houses usually have long waiting lists.

The House with a Tree of Life

This home-away-from-home is for families of seriously ill children undergoing testing and treatment at the University of

Michigan Mott's Childrens Hospital. It was sponsored by the Ann Arbor Junior League and funded entirely by donations from the McDonald Corporation, local citizens and local businesses. The challenge, therefore, for the Corporate Design Group was to design a residence compatible with other university buildings on a construction budget which could not increase.



The final design solution resulted in a three-story masonry building designed with inward orientation around a landscaped glass-covered garden. The focal point is the "Tree of Life," a brass sculpture containing the names of contributors. The dining room, with indirect light from a coffered ceiling, is located next to the garden with views into it to create a more relaxed atmosphere.

Visitors to Ronald McDonald House are greeted at the sidewalk by a brick gable-form "aedicula." This playful, child-like entry structure is intended to create a sense of arrival and act as a transitional space when entering the site.

A primary concern of the design team was to create a building residential in feeling with a home-like environment and a comfortable, tranquil atmosphere for its visitors—families from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. The structure also needed to be significant enough in its design approach to be compatible with other university buildings. The solution is a masonry building which incorporates traditional and contemporary elements in a brick exterior with hints of limestone and dormer-like forms. Brick detailing at the gable ends is reminiscent of other historic residential university buildings in the area.

The First House

Rossetti Associates, in designing the nation's first Ronald McDonald House, paid scrupulous

continues



Warm and comfortable dining spaces promote interaction between families.



The "Tree of Life" gleams in the sunlit indoor garden.

The pitched roof and brick exterior combine to create an inviting residential scale.





The serpentine form winds through the Detroit Medical Center campus.



Living space is varied by changing ceiling heights to create greater volume or a more intimate space.

attention to the concept. Situated in a dense urban area, adjacent to Children's Hospital of Michigan, the facility provides a warm, stress-reducing home-away-from-home for parents, and a relaxful atmosphere which encourages interaction among parents when not in the hospital.

The two-level commons area was designed as a gathering place for residents and has seating on both levels. Bedrooms are purposely kept small to indirectly encourage parents to spend more time in the open areas where they could draw strength and encouragement from the company of others.

In spite of its ability to house 20 families, the facility has the warmth of a personal residence. The first level was placed below grade to reduce the exterior vertical scale. A stand of pine trees was preserved on the site and now defines a play area for children.



The Award Winning House

The award-winning Western Michigan Ronald McDonald House is a two-story, seventeen-bedroom home designed by the WBDC Group. Approached by a tree-lined drive, the house sits back from the street and has a farm house look that creates a "coming home" atmosphere while also suggesting a feeling of retreat.

The first floor includes a parlor-like reception area, TV room, living and dining rooms, glass-enclosed porch, and a large kitchen specially designed to give each resident family room to store and prepare their own food.

The design of the house encourages communication and



interaction between people, but still respects individual space. As with the other projects, the bedrooms and bathrooms are small, while the communal rooms are larger and more inviting.

Of the seventeen bedroom/bathroom suites, two have been designed with individual heating and ventilation systems, to provide reverse isolation environments.

The success of these three beautifully designed projects is measured in the very real and human terms of the families who stay there. Concern for the welfare and comfort of critically ill children, the generosity of a community and the sensitive design approach to very different sites were significant factors influencing the design solutions of these Ronald McDonald Houses. ▼

Project: Ronald McDonald House

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Architect: Corporate Design Group

Structural Engineer: Robert Darvas & Assoc. P.C.

Mechanical /Electrical Engineer: Furestenberg,

Crompton & Assoc., Inc.

Contractor: Talbot & Assoc.

Photography: Balthazar Korab, Ltd

Timothy Hursley

Daniel Bartush

Project: Ronald McDonald House

Detroit, Michigan

Architects: Rossetti Associates/Architects Planners

Birmingham, Michigan

Contractor: Edward V. Monahan, Inc.

Photographer: Balthazar Korab, Ltd

Project: Ronald McDonald House

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Architects: WBDC Group

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Engineers & Landscape Architects:

Contractor: Dan Vos Construction Co.

Photographer: Pete Thomson

WBDC Group

The rural atmosphere is enhanced by the adjacent barn structure.



Warm and homey inside, the spaces are detailed with generous amounts of wood and natural light.



Styled after turn-of-the-century rowhouses, these townhomes have a decidedly midwestern flair.

UPTOWN TOWNHOMES

Automobiles and outdoor living space cohabit in a creatively urban backyard.



A stroll through Birmingham, Michigan, a quaint suburban village and former stop on the railway from Detroit to Pontiac, reveals a vital residential community where residents walk in the streets, attend concerts in the park, and sit on front porches. Visitors can frequent outdoor cafes and take carriage rides through the

downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. The downtown, due to the foresight of early town leaders, is a thriving pedestrian retail center (see summer '91 issue of Place). Its plan included a central square and flanking town hall and public library buildings of traditional brick, stone and steeply sloping slate gable roofs.

The seven-unit Merrill Park Townhomes development, just west of the library, involved two vacant lots and the removal of an existing house from a third lot. With two existing historical homes also on the street, it was envisioned

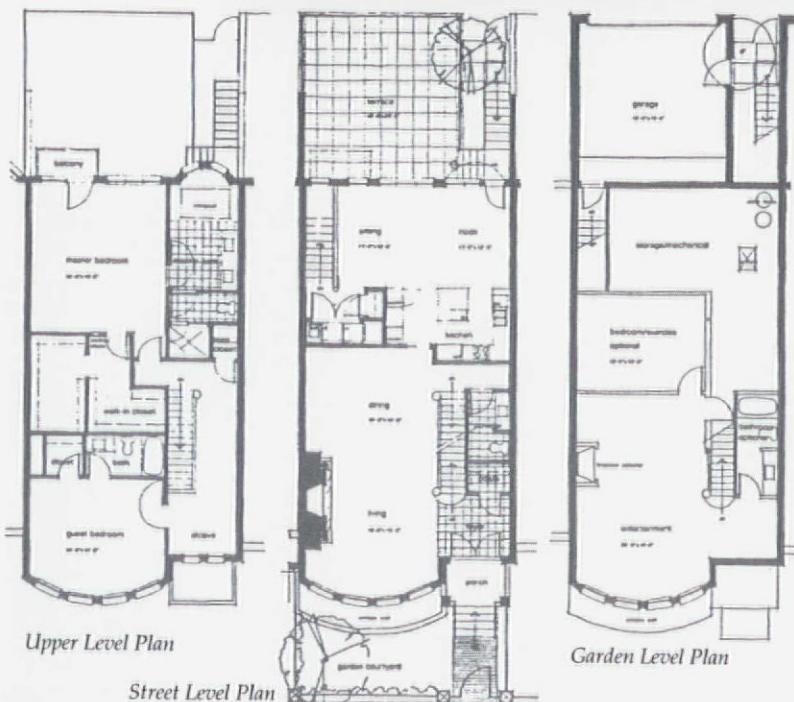
as an infill piece that would create the atmosphere of a street of row houses like the Brownstones of New York, Philadelphia or Boston. With full encouragement from a city commission excited by the concept, several members of the partnership, including Victor Saroki, AIA (along with Greg Aerts, AIA from the architectural team), Martin George, the general contractor and Brian Timlin, a representative of the development group, went on a research trip to Philadelphia and Boston. They walked through the streets, photographed the details and materials and studied the layouts of the traditional Brownstones and their urban context. This group learned their lesson well.

With these experiences fresh in mind, the architects set out to create a streetscape reminiscent of the Brownstone period in downtown Birmingham. They also wanted to re-interpret it in the local midwest context, which most notably includes Victorian Stick Style and the European Romantic Saarinen/Cranbrook Style, both of which feature gabled roofs. The resulting attached row houses on Merrill Street do have the undulating front bays and consistent street

continues



**Custom trim
hardwood and
stone complete
the finish palette.**



setback, but have gable roofs, an adaption of the midwest context to the traditional Brownstone mansard roof.

The units are 26 feet wide each, slightly wider than those of the east coast, and are set close to the sidewalk. They have landscaped courtyards, front and back, enclosed with iron fences, and brick and stone piers with gates. They have the traditional courtyard porch portico entry sequence and the ground floor is a half level above the street with a window well to allow large windows to the lower level.

The units must, however, still accommodate the private automobile with attached garages off of a rear alley drive. The garages are offset a half level down from the main floor, creating stone terraces on top which are accessed from the ground floor and are outdoor extension of the main living space.

With 3,600 square feet of living space on three levels, high ceilings, and eight-foot doors, they allow for sumptuous room layouts which can differ from unit to unit. The units have tall, three-story bays, red brick construction, vettters stone accents (the stone favored at nearby Cranbrook), tall double-hung windows and gable roof lines. Each unit has a different combination of bay shape, fenestration pattern, brick detailing and stone accents, giving the overall project the variety, harmony and character of a traditional urban street.

The proximity of this project to the downtown area of Birmingham makes it a most welcome addition to the city streetscape and makes it an appropriate reinterpretation of the Brownstone "type." This type of development is not only rich and interesting architecturally, but also brings that element of city life to the suburbs which is so often lacking—a pedestrian lifestyle. ▼

Project: Merrill Park Townhomes
Birmingham, Michigan
Architects: Victor Saroki and Associates
Birmingham, Michigan
Landscape Architect: Michael J. Dul
Birmingham, Michigan
Contractor: M. George Construction
Farmington Hills, Michigan
Photographer: Beth Singer
Franklin, Michigan

placemakers 91

Behind every issue of PLACE are PLACEMAKERS! But where are they located? Who do I call? What is their specialty? The editors of PLACE are happy, once again, to include the PLACEMAKERS DIRECTORY in this fall issue of PLACE magazine.

This easy to use directory features an alphabetical listing of firms with location, specialty of practice and a contact architect with whom to discuss your project. It is compiled as a resource for clients and other members of the building team in need of architectural services.

Participating firms are MSA members who support PLACE magazine with their projects, ideas and dollars. So dig in and find the firm best suited to your project! We are confident that it's there! For more information, don't hesitate to contact:

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HOMES SWEET HOMES

The exterior of this DesRosiers Architects-designed home features bold but simple forms that conceal the variety of levels on the interior; and a material palette that blends the house with the site.

In the twentieth century, many of the most significant advances in American architecture have been made in residential design. Highlights of the past nine decades would certainly include Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House (1909) and Fallingwater (1936), Walter Gropius' private residence (1938), Philip Johnson's Glass House (1949), and Robert Venturi's home for his

mother (1962). Each of these illustrates that the very personal nature of residential design allows for exploration of ideas and attainment of goals that are often not possible in the corporate or commercial spheres.

Michigan has by no means been on the sidelines of this advancement. Blessed with many handsome examples of the work of Wright; collections of superb Arts and Crafts houses; as the home state of Alden Dow; and with representative works by Paul Rudolph, Richard Meier, Robert Stern, and Hugh Newell Jacobson—house design in Michigan has both set and followed trends in worthy fashion.

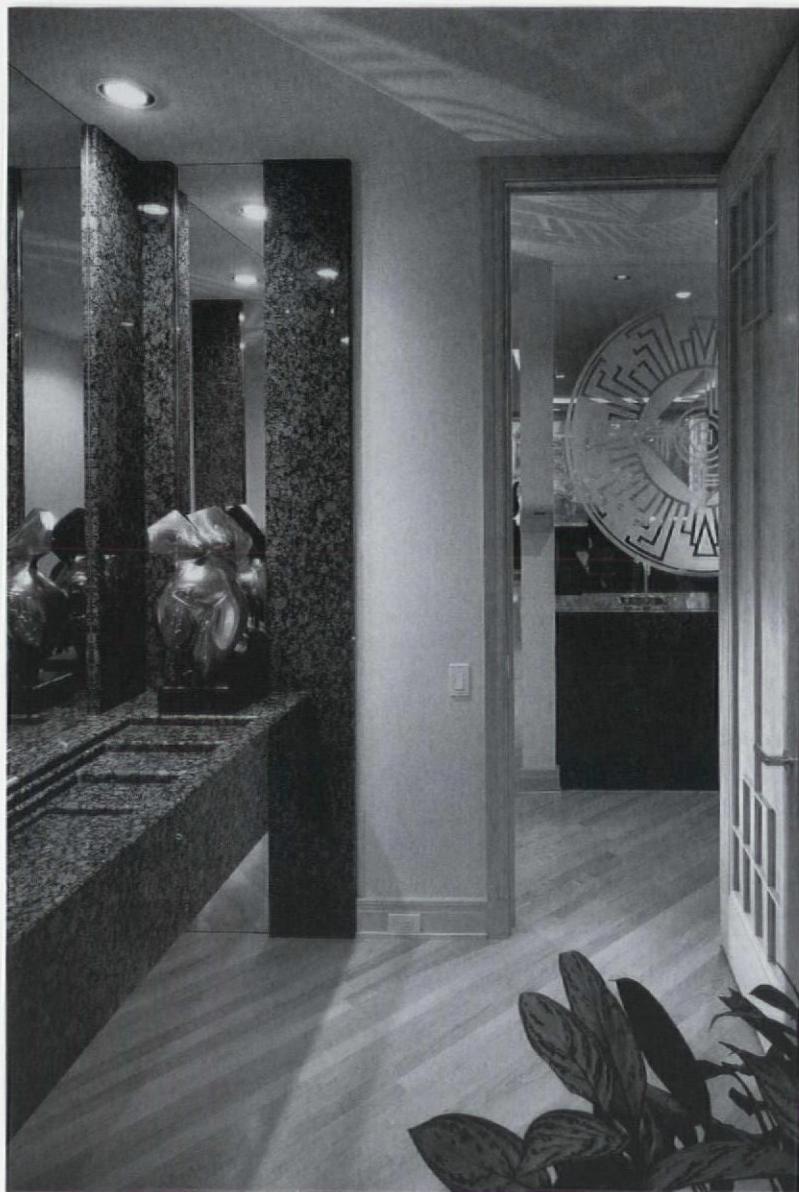
In the 1990s, the work of Michigan architects has, in many ways, reflected a return to traditional values in residential design—focusing less on "house" than on "home." In the pages that follow, we focus on four residences that—despite their wide range of size, style and conceptual approach—reflect an understanding of "home" as an incarnation of

continues





This view of the striking entry, living and dining areas of this Bloomfield Hills residence reveals the scale of the house, highlighted by maple staircases and stone piers.



Attention to detail
is evident
throughout this
large residence.

A close view of the entry court of the Bloomfield Hills residence illustrates the projecting gable over the front door—a device that works to modulate the scale of the house. Note that the materials of the house extend into the landscape to create a strong sense of unity with the site.



ideas beyond architecture, and yet strongly linked to the ways the language of architecture can be used to communicate these ideas.

Private Residence

The largest residence in our discussion, with over 11,000 square feet of living space, this residence fits neatly into more humble residential traditions, and has a warmth unusual in houses of its size. The clients approached their architect, Louis DesRosiers, with an aesthetic agenda based on their affection for the vernacular architecture of Colorado, where they own a second home; and a functional program requiring private spaces for themselves and their five children in addition to ample space for entertaining.

The finished building has a robust presence that is more a result of form and material than size. The integration of local fieldstone and cedar siding helps create a feeling of solidity and tradition. Wood shingled hip roofs recall a midwestern heritage, but their juxtaposition with projecting glass gable ends pulls the house into a more contemporary realm.

The plan and its interior modeling are based on transparency and subtle changes in level—given definition by strong sculptural elements like the stone fireplaces and maple staircases. A small palette of materials, and a warm but surprisingly light-toned color scheme help create an open but unified interior which reflects the teamwork of architect and interior designer. The owner has stated that this major undertaking was made much easier by the involvement of the interior designer "from the beginning," and the quality of consistent teamwork contributes mightily to the ultimate success of this home.



The exterior views focus on the lake through large expanses of glass.

Project: Private Residence, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
Architect: DesRosiers Architects

Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Structural Engineer: Ehlert/Bryan, Inc.
Landscape Architect: Paul T. Nakolan & Design

Associates

General Contractor: Racz Construction

Interior Design: Schaefer Design, Inc.

Photography: Balthazar Korab

Clapper Residence

The owner of this renovated residence had three goals in mind that helped shape the stunning result. The first goal was to take advantage of beautiful lake views from the site—to use the lake as an actor and create an immediate impact upon entering the house. Second, the owner wanted a house that was easy to live in, easy to move through; without complicated transitions from room to room. This is strongly linked in the owner's last primary goal—a simple house that was not simplistic.

Goals, both abstract and concrete, and an architect who listened—again Louis DesRosiers—who was, according to the owner, “able to push me to get it done right,” have resulted in a relatively compact house that is simple, open, domestic in scale and yet

continues



The stunning living room of the Clapper residence features a stacked wall of electronic components that rotate 180 degrees to also be accessed in the master bedroom.

vigorous in its effects. The horizontal quality of the exterior—its brick reveals and shallow hip roofs—pays homage to both the bold Prairie School traditions of Frank Lloyd Wright, and the subtle oriental architecture he admired. As a whole, the house is a perfect complement to the lazy lakeside site so characteristic of southeast Michigan.

Very little of the original house was retained as the plan was opened up and the interior transformed. An eighteen-foot-wide section was cut through the center of the house, opening the structure to allow panoramic views of the site and lake—made even more striking by the use of butt-glazed tinted glass the full width of the living room. Hard, spectral materials like granite and marble perfectly complement the high-tech electronics that are a presence in nearly every room. The owner, a confirmed audiophile, is particularly fond of a stacked wall of electronic components that rotates 180 degrees to be accessed from both living room and master bedroom—"it's as if there are two systems in the house." Speakers even become a decorative pattern in the house, where thirty of them dance along walls, complementing the horizontal reveals of the living room—an extension of the exterior brick treatment. A dazzling unity.

Project: Clapper Residence, Orchard Lake, Michigan
Architect: DesRosiers Architects
 Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
Landscape Architect: Paul T. Nakolan
Photography: Balthazar Korab (exterior)
 Glen Calvin Moon (interior)

Drettman Residence

The Drettman residence represents a triumph over the constraints of site, as well as the different roles that architects can play in their relationships with clients. The site in question is located on a canal near Lake St. Clair, and typically is narrow and deep. The configuration and setbacks resulted in a maximum possible footprint 36 feet wide and 60 feet deep for any prospective building. The owner, a young single man, approached George Petkoski, AIA, an architect who had built his reputation in the commercial sphere, to assist him in crafting a house that would fit the site and yet fulfill his goals for style and adaptability.

continues



The living room of the Drettman residence, with its prominent feature—the Bubinga-clad chimney form and cabinets—uniting the volumes of upper and lower levels.

A fixed storage and service core defines the kitchen.



The canalfront facade of the Drettman residence displays a traditional use of materials, juxtaposed with crisp, bold forms that combine tradition with fresh rhythms.



The owner had been raised in an environment of traditional designs, and sought this familiar warmth and tradition in his own home. He was distressed by the "sterility" of modern architecture, so Petkoski played the role of educator in delineating the significant differences between "Modern" and "contemporary" design; the former paying homage to the traditions of design that emerged from Europe in the wake of the Bauhaus in the 1930s, the latter being a collection of influences in which traditional house motifs are interpreted in a manner in step with a particular period.

The resulting house features a crisp and bold geometry that is still reflective of domestic forms that can be read immediately. It also features a palette of materials on the exterior that fit neatly into the traditions



understood by the owner. On the interior, a flexible and open plan is given form through devices such as a glass block divider and a fixed storage and service core that defines the kitchen but reads more like furniture.

Throughout, the house is enlivened by strongly vertical proportions, and the consistent use of rich African

Rosewood (Bubinga) for cabinetry and trim—all of which was designed, along with the furniture, by the architect. In this context, the most striking element is the living room fireplace wall, with its dominant chimney mass clad in the Rosewood and flanked by cabinet extensions. This element draws the volume of the living room together with that of the open second floor family room overlooking it.

The interiors are enlivened by the consistent use of African rosewood for cabinetry and trim—all of which was designed, along with the furniture, by the architect.

Project: Drettman Residence, Mt. Clemens, Michigan

Architect: George Petkoski, AIA
Birmingham, Michigan

Engineer: Gary Paradie

Builder: Rand Building Company

Millwork: Iannuzzi Millwork Company

Photography: Beth Singer

continues

The entry of the Drettman residence gives the first clues to the vertical proportions that shape the house. The sweeping quarter-round window is a contemporary treatment of a traditional fanlight—one of many elements in the house that comment on an American domestic heritage.

Sunlight enlivens the master bath greenhouse in the Saugatuck cottage—a new twist on more traditional windows represented elsewhere in the house.



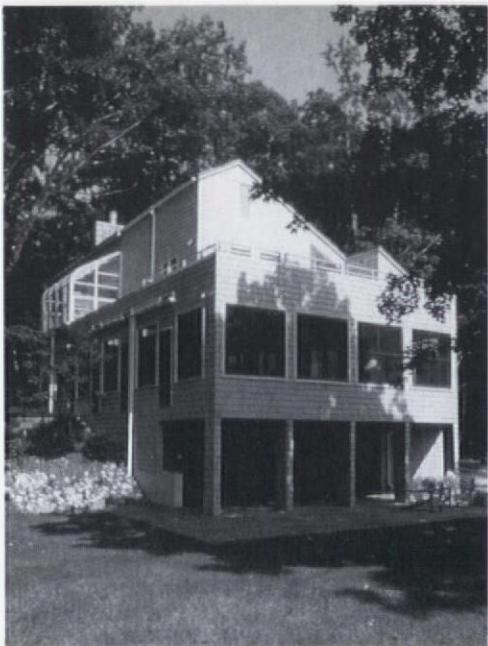
Weekend Cottage

Resort architecture is beloved by Americans no matter where it stands. In Michigan, the traditions of summer homes on Mackinaw Island, at Harbor Springs, Petoskey, Grand Haven and Saugatuck have made the Lake Michigan shore a rich repository of fanciful and friendly designs that share a relaxed quality and an appealing simplicity. This new addition to the landscape, designed for a Chicago couple by Edward Hammarskjold,

AIA, responds to these traditions with familiar materials and bold forms; creating a pleasing combination of new statements and re-statements.

Intended as a year-round weekend retreat, the house sits on a four-acre site, in a ravine, 120 feet from Lake Michigan. Its floor plan embraces living space, exterior space and, in the large screened porch, something in

continues



The exterior of this weekend cottage is dominated by the bold fenestration of the porch, made possible by the use of slip-head windows.

between. All of this is wrapped in a package of wood shingles and painted wood trim, bluestone and antique pine interior trim and sweeping forms with boldly cut out fenestration. At once the house may recall the shingle style architecture of the 1890s or 1970s; what it really recalls is the complete tradition of the second home, a tradition as rich in heritage as any other American architecture.

On the interior, tall, open spaces disguise the distinctions between interior and exterior. Gleaming white walls bathed in light from above create the perfect backdrop for the owners' collection of antique maps. Light and air also flow through the large screened porch, which wraps around two sides of the main floor, capturing lake views. On the exterior, the presence of the porch is defined by its unique fenestration: deep green adjustable louvered panels which stand between square screened openings, the latter featuring slip-head windows that disappear into the railings of the upper deck when open. The owners indicate it takes quite a while to close up this house when they leave, but while they are in residence, the uninterrupted views and breeze are a joy. ▼

By: Dane A. Johnson, AIA

Architect: Edward Hammarskjold, AIA
Kalamazoo, Michigan
Photography: By the architect

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